

SANDAS COMMUNICATION AND REPRESENTATION POLICY



PURPOSE:

SANDAS is committed to effective, accessible, transparent and equitable dissemination and receipt of information and communications within the organisation and with clients, stakeholders, and the media.

As the peak body for the Alcohol and Other Drugs sector in SA, SANDAS is frequently invited to provide representation to a broad spectrum of government, non-government and industry/business committees, boards and advisory groups..

This Policy:

- describes the principles underpinning SANDAS' requirements and intentions in relation to communication and representation.
- describes the several ways in which communication and representation occurs within and on behalf of SANDAS.
- describes how representatives are appointed.
- identifies supports available to SANDAS representatives.

POLICY STATEMENT:

SANDAS communicates for several purposes, including to:

- Increase awareness of the organisation and its goals.
- Enhance community understanding of its client target group and broader drug and alcohol issues.
- Promote the work of the organisation
- Share knowledge and improve understanding of its clients, stakeholders, and the broader community.
- Increase the profile of the non-government drug and alcohol sector.

SANDAS provides representation if:

- it is a requirement of a SANDAS funding agreement OR
- it is likely to further the achievements of SANDAS' strategic plan, aims and objectives AND the representation:
 - has a clear link to Alcohol and Other Drugs issues
 - does not create a risk to the actual or perceived integrity and independence of SANDAS.

Note that if the representation is likely to have national significance, the request may be referred through the Executive Officer to the National Peak or the National AOD Peaks Network.

Effective communication and representation in any form for any audience should:

- reflect SANDAS policies and values and be consistent with SANDAS' expressed positions.
- have clear goals and consistent messaging.
- as much as possible reflect the aggregated views of members.
- not express the personal opinions of the individual communicating on behalf of or representing the organisation

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If mistakes occur, good practice is as follows:

- where an error is made in communication or representation, acknowledge and correct it as quickly as possible.
- When modifying an earlier statement, post or email, make it clear that you are doing so.
- If a complaint is received, respond promptly in line with the SANDAS Feedback Procedure.
- Remove or retract the problematic communication if possible while the complaint is being handled.

Appointment Process

- Representatives may be staff, Board members or an employee of a member organisation.
- Representatives will be appointed at the EO's discretion, in consultation with the Board if considered necessary.

Guidelines for SANDAS Representatives

- Representatives will:
 - act as the conduit between the relevant stakeholders (organisation or body seeking a SANDAS representative) and the organisation
 - undertake to attend all meetings (a minimum of 70% attendance is expected)
 - provide a written report for the Annual Report, if requested
- Where the person representing the organisation is not the EO, they will:
 - seek guidance from, or provide information to, the Executive Officer on significant issues.
 - advise the EO in a timely manner if unable to continue as a SANDAS representative.
 - provide quarterly reports to the EO, who will update the Board via EO reports. This does not apply to network meetings as these will be monitored via normal supervision.
 - not speak on behalf of SANDAS outside of the identified setting, unless prior permission is provided by the EO or Chair.
- Any person representing SANDAS will be provided with:
 - a copy of this policy and all other SANDAS policies relevant to their role in representing the organisation (see the list in Definitions/References)
 - support and advice as required (from EO, Board Chair or Board as required)
 - a copy of the current SANDAS Strategic Plan
 - guidance on accepting any sitting fees or reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses

Communication & Representation Activities

Communication and representation activities are undertaken using a range of mechanisms and tools including:

SANDAS Website

- The SANDAS website is a primary tool for distributing outgoing information to a broad audience. Information about SANDAS' goals, services, governance, membership, current projects, events, media items and resources is maintained by the Senior Policy and Project Officer.
- Web content should be clear, concise, engaging and written in plain English.

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SANDAS eNews and Social Media

- SANDAS currently operates a Twitter account with the handle @AODpeak and provides eNews bulletins to subscribers.
- Considerations before posting on eNews or Twitter:
 - Primary purpose of eNews and Twitter is to promote the work of SANDAS and the South Australian AOD sector. All content must contribute to the fulfillment of SANDAS' purpose and have a clear goal. This may include the communication of policy, research, services, events or building a profile around a particular issue.
 - The eNews mailing list is housed on Mailchimp and is open to anyone to join, not limited to members only. An "unsubscribe" link must be included at the bottom of all eNews emails.
 - Personal social media accounts of staff or board are not to be used to make comments which could be construed as representing views of SANDAS.
 - Consider how members and other organisations or individuals might be affected by the post.
 - Abide by copyright law and where possible, link to others' work rather than reposting it.

Email updates and project-specific email updates to members and stakeholders

- Specific email updates may be used for a particular issue where relevant only to SANDAS members or particular stakeholders. This may include the communication of policy, research, services, events or building a profile around a particular issue.
- Email attachments should be sent in pdf or other non-editable formats.
- To keep the names and e-mail addresses of people included in a distribution list private, or hidden, use the Bcc field.

Conference, forum and meeting participation

- Where Board and staff members participate in conferences, forums and meetings or working groups representing SANDAS any presentations or information provided should include evidence-based, factual information.
- In general, SANDAS representation on boards and committees is undertaken by the EO or their staff delegate. In some circumstances (EO or staff unavailability, need for specific expertise, etc.) a Board member or staff member from a member service may be identified to represent SANDAS.

Media Communication

- General media enquiries are to be referred to the Executive Officer or Board Chair. Other SANDAS Board members or staff are not to speak to the media without express authorisation.
- Media releases may be developed to promote an event, project achievement or respond to a particular issue and may be developed in partnership with other organisations.
- Media releases should be concise, relevant, timely, free of errors and contain factual, evidence-based information.

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Stakeholder meetings and contacts

- SANDAS staff participate in regular meetings with relevant stakeholders to provide support, facilitate sector networking, gather sector intelligence, understand issues facing the sector and gather feedback on SANDAS services. Regular contact with stakeholders is part of SANDAS' operations and key to achieving targets in the Operational Plan. All staff are responsible for developing and maintaining effective relationships with stakeholders and for representing the interests of members in their communications.

Documentation

- The Associations Corporation Act 1985 requires that the name of the association must be printed, stamped or endorsed on every notice, advertisement, bill of exchange, receipt of other document given, published, drawn or issued by the association.

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS:

- Associations Incorporation Act 1985
- Spam Act 2003
- Privacy Act 1988
- [ISO9001:2015](#)

DEFINITIONS/REFERENCES:

- [SANDAS Strategic Directions](#)
- [SANDAS Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- [SANDAS Governance Policy](#)
- [SANDAS Employee Induction Checklist](#)
- [SANDAS eNews Procedure](#)
- [SANDAS Feedback Procedure](#)
- [SANDAS Risk Management Procedure](#)
- [SANDAS Stakeholder Engagement Procedure](#)
- [SANDAS Annual Report](#)